

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 44 and 47 without prejudice.

REMARKS

It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to these claims, as presented herein, are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103 or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

Claims 44 and 47 have been canceled herein. However, the applicants reserve their right to file one or more continuation applications directed to either or both of the canceled claims.

Claims 1-11, 13-26, 28-37, 40-43, and 48-50 are in this application.

Claims 44 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ritter, U.S. Patent No. 5,859,873, in view of Spillman, Jr., U.S. Patent No. 5,440,300. As previously indicated, claims 44 and 47 have been canceled herein.

Claims 1-11, 13-26, 28-37, 40-43, and 48-50 were allowed.

Since all of the claims now in this application have been allowed, an early official notice to that effect is solicited.

PATENT  
457020-2250.1

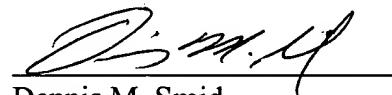
This is in response to the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance included in paragraph 6 of the present Office Action. To the extent the Examiner's statement states, implies or is construed to mean that the claims are allowable over the prior art of record because the Examiner believes the claims should be interpreted to include one or more features or limitations not recited therein, Applicants' attorney disagrees with such an interpretation. Moreover, it is Applicants' contention that there is no particular limitation in the allowed claims that is more critical than any other. The issuance of the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance should not be construed as a surrender by Applicants of any subject matter. It is the intent of Applicants, by their attorney, to construe the allowed claims so as to cover the invention disclosed in the instant application and all equivalents to which the claimed invention is entitled.

The Examiner has apparently made of record, but not replied upon, a number of documents. The applicants appreciate the Examiner's explicit finding that these documents, whether considered alone or in combination with others, do not render the claims of the present application unpatentable.

Please charge any fees incurred by reason of this response to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,  
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP

By:

  
Dennis M. Smid  
Reg. No. 34,930  
(212) 588-0800